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Report on the 2015 ANHS Members Meeting

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ANHS Report

The ANHS community is deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life, livelihood, and infrastructure caused by the massive earthquakes and aftershocks, which began on April 25, 2015 in Nepal. Many thousands of Nepalis have been killed or seriously injured by structures they themselves had carefully and arduously built: multigenerational homes; paths and roadways; temples and other houses of worship; and community centers. Still, thankfully, millions of Nepali students were mercifully spared because the largest earthquake struck on a Saturday. I am relieved to report that all ANHS members in Nepal are safe, that the ANHS-Kathmandu Research Center was undamaged, and that its director Manohari Upadhyaya and his family were unhurt.

The force of this tragedy is tremendous. We hope it will continue to be met by a greater force: that of compassionate outpouring of donations, massive organizing, and physical labor from in-country Nepalis and non-Nepalis. This includes efforts on the part of ANHS members and their families and friends. As media attention to the earthquake wanes, ANHS is committed to focusing on the needs of the region's people within our capacity as an educational, research and scholarship nonprofit organization. The ANHS Executive Council has approved three

main areas of activity as our organizational response to this catastrophe.

First, we will produce a biweekly newsletter with information on all aspects of recovery and reconstruction in the communities hardest hit by the earthquake, with a special focus on education-related activities. ANHS Executive Council member Jana Fortier has volunteered to be the first newsletter editor; we'll ask for future volunteers from the membership at large.

Second, we will create a working database of NGOs, experts, and other associations from regions and communities familiar to ANHS members; we ask that you contribute your first-hand knowledge to this effort. This data, available on the ANHS website, will help donors and others make better-informed decisions about directing aid to affected communities.

Third, we will direct any funds raised through ANHS expressly for earthquake relief and rebuilding to organizations whose mission corresponds with ours. These might include those working in museums, libraries, and educational institutions. We may also consider a future grant competition for research related to the earthquake. For these recovery and rebuilding efforts, we've created a donation page on our membership website.

Please consider a generous tax-deductible donation and tell your family and friends. Thank you!

Turning, soberly, to the annual report, 2014 was nonetheless an exciting year for ANHS. It began with the highly successful third Himalayan Studies Conference (HSC3) at Yale University, attended by over 200 scholars, students, professionals, and artists from 14 countries. The conference theme “Communities” focused the presentations in 40 panels, roundtables and invited keynotes around the cultural, religious, political, medical, artistic and environmental issues dividing and connecting peoples across the Himalayan region. Guests from Bhutan contributed new knowledge to our understandings of identity, environment, and policy. Old and new friends enthusiastically engaged throughout the exhilarating three days, and departed with a renewed commitment to what ANHS offers. Put another way, we all had a great time!

The journal *HIMALAYA* traversed and connected new publishing terrain and emerged in 2014 as an aesthetic three volumes of essays, research-based and thematic articles, book and conference reviews, and original artwork. I’ve heard from many of you about

how much you like the journal’s new look. The editors are to be credited with expanding the reach of the journal, focusing on new international authors, developing thematic and current issues, and importantly connecting us to artistic inspirations from the Himalayan region. Along with the traditional print copies, the journal is open access, too.

The ANHS Executive Council took a series of steps in their annual Madison meeting to meet increased costs to publish the journal by asking members to pay an at-cost expense of \$25 for receiving two print issues per annum, while keeping most ANHS membership fees unchanged, and reducing Asian country individual and institutional membership fees by about 30% to encourage more international memberships. The association will also open a journal savings account, to help with future publishing costs.

Our newest affiliate, the ANHS-Kathmandu Research Center (KRC), in the heart of the bustling city, very quickly grew into an important—and sustainable—research office, open to all ANHS members and their friends and colleagues. It is scheduled to host two service-learning programs within the year, and has organized the sizable gift of a 1,300-volume library, which we expect to enhance

our grant competitiveness. Our new suite of office and private room rental space, and a small but very helpful US Embassy grant for support of new revenue streams, round out KRC’s development in 2014.

In addition to the support generated through KRC’s research-based services to US higher education and scholarship, a second KRC revenue “stream” is the latest book edition of a *HIMALAYA* special issue, this one on gender, published through our on-going partnership with Himal Books and the Social Science Baha. Such KRC-generated revenues help support speakers, conferences and other events at or with KRC. We’re pleased to announce that for the fourth consecutive year, ANHS/ANHS-KRC is co-sponsoring the annual summer Kathmandu Conference on Nepal and the Himalaya, July 22-24, along with the Social Science Baha, the Britain-Nepal Academic Council, and our newest co-sponsor, the Centre for Himalayan Studies-CNRS, France.

These many new and ongoing initiatives in 2014 are exciting but they have been costly. ANHS generated negative net revenue of \$13,811. This deficit was met primarily through our healthy savings over the years. The 2015 ANHS budget is projected to

generate modest positive net revenue, and the Communications and Grants Committee will submit programming grant proposals this year. ANHS membership is at an all-time high of 239 current members, including 13 institutional members.

So many of you have contributed to and benefitted from ANHS throughout the year. I can't thank you enough for all do for this wonderful association. We hope to see many of you at the annual conference on South Asia in Madison, Wisconsin, October 2015, and at the Fourth Himalayan Studies Conference (HSC4), to be hosted by the University of Texas–Austin, February 26–28, 2016.

With thanks and best wishes,

Mary Cameron
President, ANHS

